

REMARKS

Overview

The Examiner responded in the prior Office Action as follows: rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Fado et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,067,084); rejected claims 10-14, 16-17, 19, 28, 33, 35-38, 40-47, 52-53, 55-57 and 59 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Miller et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,661,437); rejected claims 20, 24 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Cohen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,507,845); rejected claims 3-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fado in view of Miller; rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fado in view of Amezcua et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,458,331); rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fado in view of Janik (U.S. Patent No. 5,285,398); rejected claims 15, 39 and 54 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Amezcua; rejected claims 18 and 31-32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Best (U.S. Patent No. 4,569,026); rejected claims 21-23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen in view of Miller; rejected claims 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Schmidt et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,546,554); rejected claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Janik; and rejected claims 48-51 and 58 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miller in view of Cohen.

Applicants hereby amend independent claims 1, 10, 19 and 35 in order to clarify the subject matter of their invention. Applicants further hereby cancel claims 20-34 and 43-59, and add claims 60-81. Thus, claims 1-19, 35-42 and 60-81 are now pending.

Analysis

The Examiner has rejected all of the previously pending claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) or 103(a) as being unpatentable over one or a combination of several prior art references.

However, all of the currently pending claims have been amended or are new, and recite various features and functionality that do not appear to be present in any of the cited prior art references. In particular, all of the pending claims as amended recite receiving information about a current context of the user, and using the current context information to alter how the user is allowed to interact with information being presented in accordance with that context. By providing such user interaction alterations based on the current context of the user, the system can dynamically adapt to and optimize the interaction experience for the user based on current conditions.

For example, claim 1 as amended recites a mobile computer that is programmed to “receive information about a current context of the user from a context awareness component that receives sensed information from multiple sources and that mediates amongst the multiple sources to build a model of the current context of the user”; to, “in response to the received information about the current context of the user, alter one or more of the subset of steps that needs to be performed by the user by altering multiple interaction elements that affect interactions with the user for the current step . . .”; and to, “when input data is not received from the user for the current step and information received from the context awareness component indicates that the user is currently distracted, further altering one or more of the interaction elements for the current step in such a manner as to be less cognitively burdensome for the user”. Each of the other pending independent claims 10, 19, 35, and 74-80 as amended or newly added recite similar language regarding receiving current context information for the user and using the received information to alter how the user can interact with information or options being presented.

Conversely, while at least some of the prior art is generally related to presenting information to users about actions for tasks that are to be performed, none of the cited art references appear to receive and use such information about a current context of the user for any purpose, let alone to alter how the user can interact with information being presented in such a manner as to reflect that current context.

For example, Miller discusses means to simplify complex user interactions through the use of hierarchically ordered menus and showing the selection path from

the parent menu, but does not appear to make any mention of sensing any context of the user nor adapting the interaction based upon it.

Cohen discusses methods to improve "awareness" of members in a collaborative workgroup of each other's progress and status and to assist in the formation of collaborative workgroups and the divisions of labor between them, but "awareness" in their framework appears to be document-centered rather than pertaining to the real-world and to the actions of participants as they collaborate. Cohen similarly appears to make no mention of sensing a user's context as a basis for adapting interactions with the user.

Fado pertains to the configuration of microphones using a sequence of GUIs that illustrate the proper means to do so. The input from the user via the microphone is performed merely for the purposes of data input or to manage the path through the sequence of GUIs, and does not appear to provide any information for a model of the user's current context that is then used to alter the interaction with the user.

Schmidt discusses a browser-independent and automatic apparatus and method for receiving, installing, and launching applications from a browser is described. It does not appear to make any mention of sensing of the user's context or the adaptation of the interaction based upon what is sensed.

Best discusses branching within a video story sequence based upon spoken utterances. In a manner similar to Fado, the input from the microphone is used for the purposes of data input or to manage the path through the sequence of GUIs, and does not appear to provide any information for a model of the user's current context that is then used to alter the interaction with the user.

Janik primarily discusses flexible wearable computers and does not appear to discuss the sensing of context information or its use to amend user interaction when sequencing through a series of steps to accomplish a task.

Amezcuia discusses the ability of a word processor to emulate a data processing terminal for a host data processor in an information processing system and a capability for the display word processor to be switched between data processing and word or text processing sessions, with a status line able to provide the user some measure of information regarding the status of background word processing. There does not

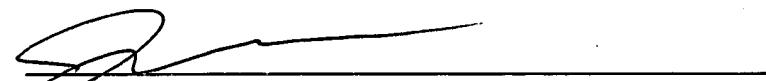
appear to be any provisions for sensing a user's context and adapting the interaction with the user to accomplish tasks based upon the sensed context.

Thus, as none of the cited prior art appears relevant to receiving and using context information about a user to alter interactions with the user, all of the independent claims appear to be patentable. Furthermore, since the pending dependent claims include the features of those claims from which they depend, they are thus allowable for the same reasons as those claims. Moreover, the pending dependent claims also recite additional features lacking in the cited references, and are thus allowable on the basis of those features as well, although these additional features are not enumerated here for the sake of brevity.

Conclusion

In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider this application and timely allow all pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 694-4815.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures:
Postcard
Transmittal document (+ copy)
Petition for an Extension of Time (+ 2 copies)

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